

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Dupont Circle HD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	2147-2149 P Street, NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	July 28, 2016	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	16-528	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Kim Elliott	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Valor P Street, LLC, with PGN architects seeks conceptual design review to add a 5-story rear addition to a pair of 3-story rowhouses in the 2005 expansion of the Dupont Circle Historic District.

Property Description

This pair of rowhouses was designed by architect Alfred B. Mullett in 1894 and now sits along a diverse row of 1-story historic commercial buildings and non-contributing 10-story apartment and hotel buildings. The interior of the houses at 2147-2149 have had extensive renovations over the last several decades to accommodate different uses as a restaurant and nightclub, resulting in the loss of the original structural system and the construction of additions at the rear bringing it to 100% lot occupancy. The project is currently going through the BZA process with a request for rear yard set-back relief. Directly behind the property is the Walsh Stable, designed by Lemuel Norris in 1903 and designated as a local and national landmark in 1986.

Proposal

The project calls for demolition of the current rear additions and the construction of a new 5-story addition incorporating a commercial/retail first floor and residential units on floors two through five. The addition would sit on top of the original rowhouses—set back 27' from the façade and extend to the rear property line. The roof terrace at the 4th floor would be set back 11'. The façade would be restored—removing the alterations that have been applied over the years and returning the historic-defining features to this elevation (1 over 1 wood windows, special arched window, slate roof, maintaining chimneys, relocating the door from the bay projection).

Evaluation

The P Street corridor is a busy commercial strip with a variety of building types, massings, and styles, of historic and non-contributing buildings, such that there is no consistent roof line or architectural continuity. In such circumstances, the Board has sometimes found additions to be compatible where they are visible from the street as long as the taller addition is not built on top of the main block of the historic structure and can convincingly read as a separate structure behind the historic building.

The current proposal includes a setback of 27'. While this is a significant setback, the main block of the building of 2147 is at 34' (and 2149 is even further back), and the backs of the buildings – the extent of their depth – can be seen from the street. Accordingly, as proposed, it is obvious that the new construction sits on top of the buildings rather than behind them. At a minimum, the setback should be

increased to at least 34' where this natural break exists so it is clear that the addition is not built on the historic structure.

The proposed project maintains the façade and the exterior party walls, but demolishes the roofs and rear walls of the historic buildings. Because of the previous loss of so much of the buildings' interior structure, it is vital to maintain and restore what still remains of the historic buildings, including articulating the original side walls and where they end.

The overall massing of the building is not incompatible with the varied context—ranging from one and two-story commercial buildings at the corner to four-story apartment buildings on the same square facing 22nd Street and 10-story buildings to the east of the site. The large-scale 10-story buildings were built before the Dupont Circle Historic District was expanded to include this section of P Street. The proximity of the proposal with the landmark Walsh Stable, one of the largest and most unaltered stable buildings in the city, should also be considered, although the 22' wide lot between the new project and the Walsh Stable is owned by the adjacent Dupont West condominium and is likely to remain open.

With all four elevations of the addition visible from street view, it is important that the design and materials be compatible on all elevations. The proposed front façade design calls for a floor to ceiling aluminum window system while the other three elevations are designed as brick with aluminum and metal panel punched windows. The rear and side elevations have a successfully composed design that is compatible to the historic building elevation through the soldier course brick banding detail and the proportions of the punched aluminum windows that reference the scale of the historic windows. Further study could be done so that the composition of the front elevation addition and the other 3 elevations are more closely correlated and unified with each other. The side elevations should also clearly indicate the mass of the original historic rowhouses, differentiating the old and new construction through a material change or detailing.

The scope of façade restoration work helps create a more compatible street front by retaining, repairing and replacing important character-defining features based on research done by HPO. The replacement windows are consistent with the Board's standards; as the plans are refined, the additional doors on 2147 should be aligned with the 2nd and 3rd floor windows above.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board find the concept generally consistent with the historic district and consistent with the preservation act and to delegate final approval to staff with the following recommendations:

- 1. Shift addition back off of the main block of the house to 34' and highlight the original building mass;*
- 2. Continue to develop the 4 elevations so they are a more cohesive design element;*
- 3. Align front doors with 2nd and 3rd floor façade windows;*
- 4. No portion of this recommendation or the Board's action shall be construed as support for any needed zoning relief.*